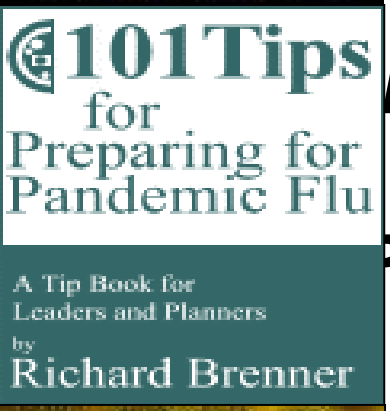
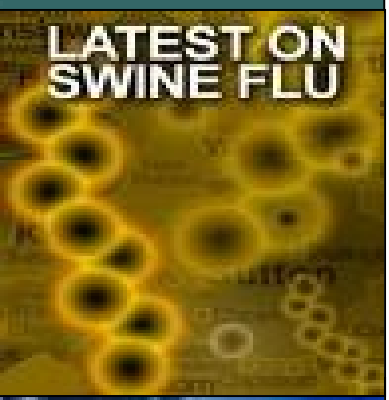
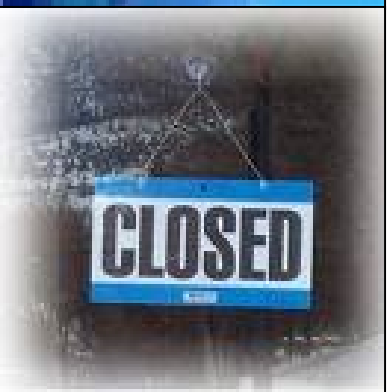


Pandemic Influenza

Preparedness and Response



Preparing the Workplace



PREPARING THE WORKPLACE

• A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. Pandemic Influenza (PI) occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which there is little or no immunity in the human population, begins to cause serious illness and then spreads easily person-to-person worldwide. Worldwide PI could have a major effect on the global economy, including travel, trade, tourism, food, consumption and eventually, investment and financial markets. Planning for PI is essential to minimize impact. As with any catastrophe, having a contingency plan is essential.

• In the event of PI, leadership will play a key role in protecting personnel's health and safety. Agencies will likely experience personnel absences. Proper planning will protect personnel and lessen the impact of PI within the agency. As stated in the President's National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza, all stakeholders must plan and be prepared.

• This PI planning guidance / checklist was developed based upon traditional infection control and industrial hygiene practices. This guidance is intended for planning purposes and is not specific to a particular viral strain. Additional guidance may be needed as an actual pandemic unfolds and more is known about the characteristics of the virulence of the virus, disease transmissibility, clinical manifestation, drug susceptibility, and risks to different age groups and subpopulations. This planning guidance should be used to help identify risk levels in workplace settings and appropriate control measures that include good hygiene, cough etiquette, social distancing, the use of personal protective equipment, and staying home from work when ill. Up-to-date information and guidance is available through the
•www.flu.gov website.

PREPARING THE WORKPLACE

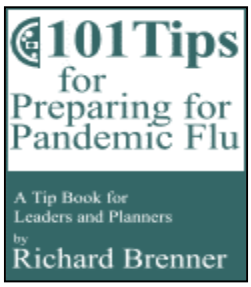
- **How a Severe Pandemic Influenza Could Affect the Workplace**

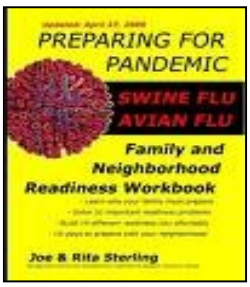
• Unlike natural disasters or terrorist events, PI will be widespread, affecting multiple areas of the United States and other countries at the same time. A pandemic will also be an extended event, with multiple waves of outbreaks in the same geographic area; each outbreak could last from 6 to 8 weeks. Waves of outbreaks may occur over a year or more. Your workplace will likely experience:

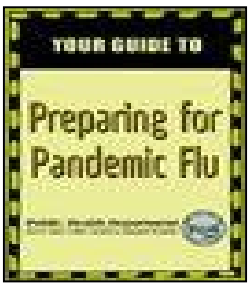
  • Absenteeism - A pandemic could affect as many as 40 percent of the workforce during periods of peak influenza illness. Personnel could be absent because they are sick, must care for sick family members or for children if schools or day care centers are closed, are afraid to come to work, or the employer might not be notified that the employee has died.

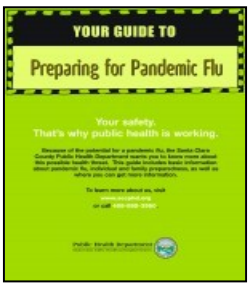
- **Who Should Plan for a Pandemic**

• To reduce the impact of PI on your operations and personnel, it is important to begin continuity planning for a pandemic now. Lack of continuity planning can result in a cascade of failures as employers attempt to address challenges of a pandemic with insufficient resources and personnel who might not be adequately trained in the jobs they will be asked to perform. Proper planning will allow agencies to better protect their personnel.









PREPARING THE WORKPLACE

- **How Influenza Can Spread Between People**

• Influenza is thought to be primarily spread through large droplets (droplet transmission) that directly contact the nose, mouth or eyes. These droplets are produced when infected people cough, sneeze or talk, sending the relatively large infectious droplets and very small sprays (aerosols) into the nearby air and into contact with other people. Large droplets can only travel a limited range; therefore, people should limit close contact (within 6 feet) with others when possible. To a lesser degree, human influenza is spread by touching objects contaminated with influenza viruses and then transferring the infected material from the hands to the nose, mouth or eyes. Influenza may also be spread by very small infectious particles (aerosols) traveling in the air. The contribution of each route of exposure to influenza transmission is uncertain at this time and may vary based upon the characteristics of the influenza strain.

PREPARING THE WORKPLACE

- **How Agencies Can Protect Their Personnel**

• For most agencies, protecting their personnel will depend on emphasizing proper hygiene (disinfecting hands and surfaces) and practicing social distancing. Social distancing means reducing the frequency, proximity, and duration of contact between people to reduce the chances of spreading pandemic influenza from person-to-person. Agencies should implement good hygiene and infection control practices.

• The types of measures that may be used to protect yourself, and your personnel (listed from most effective to least effective) are: engineering controls, administrative controls, work practices, and personal protective equipment (PPE).

• There are advantages and disadvantages to each type of control measure when considering the ease of implementation, effectiveness, and cost. For example, hygiene and social distancing can be implemented relatively easily and with little expense, but this control method requires personnel to modify and maintain their behavior, which may be difficult to sustain.

- **Work Practice Controls**

Not Started In Progress Completed

• Providing resources and a work environment that promotes personal hygiene. For example, provide tissues, no-touch trash cans, hand soap, hand sanitizer, disinfectants and disposable towels for personnel to clean their work surfaces.

PREPARING THE WORKPLACE

Not Started ◯ In Progress ◯ Completed ◯

• Encouraging personnel to obtain a seasonal influenza vaccine (this helps to prevent illness from seasonal influenza strains that may continue to circulate).

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• Providing personnel with up-to-date education and training on influenza risk factors, protective behaviors, and instruction on proper behaviors (for example, cough etiquette and care of personal protective equipment).

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• Developing policies to minimize contacts between personnel.

- **Administrative Controls**

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• Developing policies that encourage ill personnel to stay at home without fear of any reprisals.

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• The discontinuation of unessential travel to locations with high illness transmission rates.

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• Consider practices to minimize face-to-face contact between personnel such as e-mail, websites and teleconferences.

PREPARING THE WORKPLACE

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• Where possible, encourage flexible work arrangements such as telecommuting or flexible work hours to reduce the number of your employees who must be at work at one time or in one specific location.

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• Developing emergency communications plans. Maintain a forum for answering personnel concerns. Develop Internet based communications if feasible.

- **Engineering Controls**

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• Installing physical barriers, such as clear plastic sneeze guards.

- **Personal Protective Equipment**

Not Started ◯ In Progress ◯ Completed ◯

• Selected based on the hazard to personnel.

Not Started ◯ In Progress ◯ Completed ◯

• Properly fitted and some must be periodically refitted (e.g., respirators).

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• Conscientiously and properly worn.

PREPARING THE WORKPLACE

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• Regularly maintained and replaced, as necessary.

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• Properly removed and disposed of to avoid contamination of self, others or the environment.

- **Steps to Reduce the Risk of Exposure to PI in the Workplace**

• The best strategy to reduce the risk of becoming infected with influenza during a pandemic is to avoid crowded settings and other situations that increase the risk of exposure to someone who may be infected. If it is absolutely necessary to be in a crowded setting, the time spent in a crowd should be as short as possible. Some basic hygiene and social distancing precautions that can be implemented in every workplace include the following:

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• Encourage sick personnel to stay at home.

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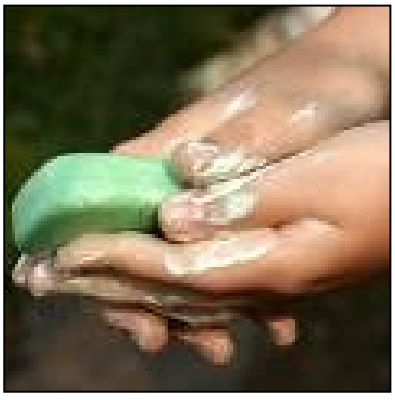
• Encourage personnel to wash their hands frequently with soap and water or with hand sanitizer if there is no soap or water available. Also, encourage personnel to avoid touching their noses, mouths, and eyes.



PREPARING THE WORKPLACE

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• Encourage your personnel to cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or to cough and sneeze into their upper sleeves if tissues are not available. Everyone should wash their hands or use a hand sanitizer after they cough, sneeze or blow their noses.

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• Personnel should avoid close contact with their coworkers (maintain a separation of at least 6 feet). They should avoid shaking hands and always wash their hands after contact with others. Even if personnel wear gloves, they should wash their hands upon removal of the gloves in case their hand(s) became contaminated during the removal process.

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• Provide personnel with tissues and trash receptacles, and with a place to wash or disinfect their hands.

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• Keep work surfaces, telephones, computer equipment and other frequently touched surfaces and office equipment clean. Be sure that any cleaner used is safe and will not harm your personnel or your office equipment.

PREPARING THE WORKPLACE

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• Discourage personnel from using other personnel's phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment.

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• Minimize situations where groups of people are crowded together, such as in a meeting. Use e-mail, phones and text messages to communicate with each other. When meetings are necessary, avoid close contact by keeping a separation of at least 6 feet, where possible, and assure that there is proper ventilation in the meeting room.

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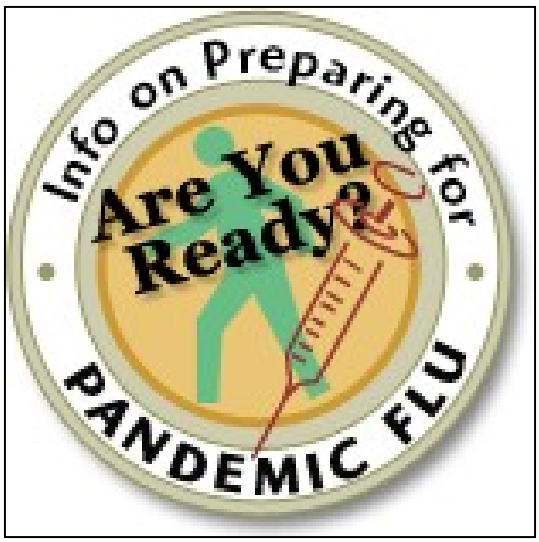
• Reducing or eliminating unnecessary social interactions can be very effective in controlling the spread of infectious diseases. Reconsider all situations that permit or require personnel and visitors (including family members) to enter the workplace. Workplaces which permit family visitors on site should consider restricting/eliminating that option during PI. Work sites with on-site day care should consider in advance whether these facilities will remain open or will be closed, and the impact of such decisions on personnel.



PREPARING THE WORKPLACE

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• Promote healthy lifestyles, including good nutrition, exercise, and smoking cessation. A person’s overall health impacts their body’s immune system and can affect their ability to fight off, or recover from, an infectious disease.

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